

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO HICOMTERPACIS SAIPAN MARIAN ISLANDS

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 1353

USARBCO MACHINATO/TTPI-LNO

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PASS NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE, WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, JA, TQ

SUBJECT: MICRONESIA CLAIMS AGREEMENT: TUNA BOAT PROJECT

REF.: TOKYO 4809

SUMMARY: EMBASSY DISCUSSED TUNA BOATS WITH OFFICIAL OF
FEDERATION OF JAPAN TUNA FISHERIES COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATIONS.
HE INDICATED STEEL BOATS SIMILAR TO TTPI
DESIGN CAN BE PROCURED IN JAPAN THOUGH MORE EXTENSIVE
THAN TTPI ESTIMATE; FRP BOATS ALSO AVAILABLE BUT THEY
YET MORE EXPENSIVE. IN VIEW CONTINUING INFLATION IN
JAPAN WHICH WILL CONTINUE TO ERODE TTPI PURCHASING
POWER, AND AS ONLY THIRTEEN MONTHS REMAIN IN THREE YEAR
PROCUREMENT PERIOD, EMBASSY RECOMMENDS TTPI AGREE TO BOAT
PROJECT, LEAVING OPEN QUESTION OF STEEL VS FRP AND EXACT
SPECIFICATIONS. END SUMMARY.

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1. ON APRIL 16 EMBOFF AND EMBASSY REGFISHATT (NAKATSU) MET

SHOJIRO SHIMURA, MANAGER, GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT, FEDERATION OF JAPAN TUNA FISHERIES COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATIONS, TO DISCUSS QUESTION OF STEEL AND FRP TUNA BOATS. SHIMURA, AFTER STUDYING TTPI PROPOSAL ON STEEL TUNA BOATS, MADE THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS:

2. CONTRARY TO THE INITIAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROPOSAL, JAPANESE SHIP BUILDERS ARE CAPABLE OF BUILDING STEEL VESSELS SIMILAR TO THAT PROPOSED BY TTPI. FURTHERMORE, STEEL IS CHEAPER THAN FIBERGLASS REINFORCED PLASTIC (FRP). HOWEVER, EXCEPT FOR ONE FIRM, JAPANESE BUILDERS ARE NOT EXPERIENCED AT BUILDING AMERICAN STYLE BOATS SUCH AS THE TTPI BOAT AS ROUGH ESTIMATE, SHIMURA SAID STEEL TUNA BOAT SIMILAR TO WHAT TTPI DESIRES WOULD COST ABOUT 100 MILLION YEN. IF EVERY FEATURE DESIRED BY TTPI WERE INCORPORATED, THE PRICE COULD BE SUBSTANTIALLY HIGHER. ON OTHER HAND, JAPANESE BUILDERS NORMALLY GIVE 15 TO 20 PERCENT DISCOUNTS ON ORDERS OF TEN BOATS, BUT SHIMURA DID NOT KNOW WHETHER SUCH A DISCOUNT WOULD BE POSSIBLE ON A SMALLER ORDER. SHIMURA'S ROUGH ESTIMATE GIVEN ABOVE INCLUDES SOPHISTICATED NAVIGATION EQUIPMENT WHICH STANDARD ON JAPANESE BOATS; IF THIS NOT NECESSARY ON TTPI BOATS, COST WOULD DECREASE SOMEWHAT. SHIMURA STRESSED THAT INFLATION IS SEVERE IN JAPAN AND PRICES LIKELY RISE FURTHER AS RESULT OF RECENT ROUND OF WAGE HIKES; DELAY IN ORDERING BOATS MEANS THEY

WILL BE YET MORE EXPENSIVE.

3. RE PARTICULAR FEATURES DESIRED BY TTPI, SHIMURA MADE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

A. FORCED BAIT WATER CIRCULATION. JAPANESE BOATS INCORPORATE THIS FEATURE THOUGH WATER CIRCULATES AT SLOWER RATE, ABOUT ONCE EVERY 30 MINUTES.

B. ROUNDED CORNERS IN BAIT WELLS. JAPANESE BOATS DO NOT USE THIS FEATURE. NORMALLY, BAITS ARE HELD IN FLOATING

TRAPS UNTIL THEIR TRANSFER TO FISH WELL. THIS PERMITS UNCLASSIFIED

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BAITFISH TO BECOME ADJUSTED BEING PENNED AND REDUCES MORTALITY. ROUNDER CORNER FEATURE WOULD BE VERY EXPENSIVE.

C. BAIT DOORS. THIS FEATURE NOT IN USE IN JAPANESE BOATS. ONE REASON IS THAT BAIT WELLS IN JAPANESE BOATS ARE USED TO STORE FISH LATER IN VOYAGE AND ARE INSULATED AND REFRIGERATED. IF BAIT WELLS SEPARATE FROM FISH STORAGE HOLD, BAIT DOORS POSSIBLE, BUT, OTHER HAND, FISH CAPACITY

OF BOAT WOULD BE THAT MUCH LESS. (QUESTION ALSO ARISES WHETHER EXTRA FUEL TANKS CAN BE USED TO HOLD FISH WHEN FUEL EXHAUSTED.)

D. MACHINERY AFT. SHIMURA UNFAMILIAR WITH VIBRO-ISOLATION MOUNTS OR OMEGA PITCH CONTROL. PERHAPS THESE ITEMS COULD BE IMPORTED, HE SAID, BUT IMPORTATION WOULD BE EXPENSIVE. JAPANESE BOATS UTILIZE PUMPS DESIGNED TO REDUCE VIBRATION, AND VARIABLE PITCH PROPELLORS. EMBASSY COMMENT: EMBASSY QUESTIONS WHETHER GOJ WOULD APPROVE NON-JAPANESE, IMPORTED COMPONENTS IN ANY CASE. END COMMENT.

E. IN JAPANESE BOATS, FISHERMEN FISH FROM SIDE RATHER THAN STERN.

F. STEEL VS FRP HULLS. FRP BOATS ARE ABOUT 1.2 TIMES AS EXPENSIVE AS STEEL, BUT EASIER TO MAINTAIN. ON OTHER HAND, IF FRP HULL WERE DAMAGED, REPAIR WOULD REQUIRE SPECIAL SKILLS PROBABLY NOT AVAILABLE IN TTPI; FROM THIS ASPECT STEEL HULLS WERE SAFER UNQTE.

4. SUMMING UP, SHIMURA SAID THAT HE ESTIMATED THAT, AT MOST, TTPI COULD PROCURE FIVE STEEL BOATS OF TYPE DESIRED WITH FUNDS AVAILABLE. ABSENCE OF SOPHISTICATED NAVIGATION EQUIPMENT WOULD MAKE BOATS LESS EXPENSIVE. DUE TO CLOSE PROXIMITY FISHING GROUNDS, HE THOUGHT ICE BOATS SHOULD BE

ADEQUATE AND THEY ARE MUCH CHEAPER SINCE THEY WOULD NOT REQUIRE EXPENSIVE REFRIGERATION EQUIPMENT, WHICH CAN ACCOUNT FOR 30 PERCENT OF COST OF BOAT. IF TTPI WERE TO SUBMIT ITS DESIGN TO THE JAPAN MEDIUM-CLASS SHIPBUILDERS ASSOCIATION, THAT ORGANIZATION COULD MORE ACCURATELY

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ESTIMATE COST OF VESSEL AND REFER TTPI TO COMPETENT SHIP-BUILDER.

5. EMBASSY COMMENT: IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT BOATS SIMILAR IF NOT IDENTICAL TO TTPI DESIGN CAN BE CONSTRUCTED IN JAPAN, THOUGH AT CONSIDERABLY HIGHER COST THAN TTPI ESTIMATE OF JANUARY 1973. AS SHIMURA SAID, PRICES IN JAPAN LIKELY TO CONTINUE TO RISE AND THIS WILL AFFECT NOT ONLY BOATS BUT ALSO ALL OTHER ITEMS ON LIST OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES. IT SEEMS TO EMBASSY THAT TTPI NOW HAS THREE ALTERNATIVES: A) AGREE TO BOAT PROJECT LEAVING OPEN QUESTION OF STEEL OR FRP. EVEN PRIOR TO FORMAL US-GOJ AGREEMENT ON LIST AND PROCEDURES TTPI COULD PROCEED WITH DISCUSSIONS WITH JAPANESE SHIPBUILDERS, KEEPING IN MIND DESIRABILITY OF VARIOUS FEATURES ON ONE HAND,

AND COST AND DESIRABILITY OF PROCURING MAXIMUM NUMBER OF
BOATS ON OTHER HAND. B) SEND TTPI EXPERT TO TOKYO TO
OBTAIN MORE DETAILED INFO PRIOR TO MAKING ANY
DECISION ON BOAT PROJECT. C) SELECT ALTERNATE ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT PROJECT. AS LATTER TWO ALTERNATIVES LIKELY
TO INVOLVE PASSAGE OF CONSIDERABLE TIME; AND IN VIEW
JAPANESE INFLATION AND FACT THAT ONLY 13 MONTHS REMAIN
IN THREE YEAR PROCUREMENT PERIOD; EMBASSY RECOMMENDS
ALTERNATIVE (A).
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